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Croatia

Livestock and Products

Trichinosis Update

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Report Highlights: Croatia faces regular Trichinosis outbreaks, usually culminating in the winter months. The 2002/03 disease 'season' has seen about 100 cases, nearly two times more than last year. The outbreaks began during the war in the 1990's when veterinary controls on the trade and transport of live hogs was weak. This was especially true in the agricultural region of Slavonia, where most of the current Trichinosis problems are today. Government policies aimed at controlling the disease are a barrier to U.S. pork exports.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Vienna [AU1], HR

In 1995, the Ministry of Agriculture issued an Order that every slaughtered hog in Slavonija has to be inspected on Trichinosis. In 1998 this Order was expanded to include all of Croatia and the Order specifically includes backyard producers. This same carcass-by-carcass testing requirement is also applied to imported pork and this has made it difficult for U.S. pork suppliers, who do not have problems with the disease. Croatian officials do not yet recognize the U.S. system for monitoring Trichinosis nor do accept freeze treatment of meat as a legitimate method of controlling the disease. There are ongoing negotiations between USDA/FAS in cooperation with APHIS and Croatian Ministry of Agriculture to modify the Trichinosis statement that is currently required for pork imports. The annual import market for U.S. pork for processing could be as high as \$18 million.

Most Trichinosis outbreaks in Croatia occur from October to February. During the war, there where no valid inspections on the trade and transport of live animals in Slavonia. The biggest problem areas in Slavonia are Osijek, Slavonski Brod and Virovitica. Trichinosis became a problem because in the wintertime small Croatian farmers slaughter their hogs and the pork is often processed into raw, lightly smoked, sausages.

It is estimated that in the 2002/2003 slaughtering season more than 100 people have contracted Trichinosis but some local physicians fear there are many more unreported cases, in part because the disease symptoms are similar to the common flu. There are currently weekly reports of outbreaks. Recently, there was a report of nine infected people in the Krizevci area and the source of this outbreak is believed to be raw sausage. In 2001, only 50-52 people where infected. In 2000, 152 cases where reported.

To help control the disease, the government is killing rats in affected areas and in 2002 the budget for that was kn 2.5 million (\$350,000).